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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUANGZHOU 030533

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STATE FOR EAP/CM AND DRL
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/16

TAGS: PHUM PGOV SOCI CH

SUBJECT: Leading Member of "Rights Protection Movement"
Arrested on Illegal Business Charges

REF: A) Guangzhou 29575; B) Guangzhou 14013; C) Beijing

06612

¶1. (U) Classified by Consul General Robert X Goldberg.
Reason 1.4 (d).

¶2. (C) Summary: On September 14, Guo Feixiong, a leading figure in the "Rights Protection Movement," a nation-wide virtual network of activists, was arrested in Guangzhou on charges of "illegal business operation". This is the fourth time Guo has been detained or arrested in the last year. Other activists in South China are also facing increasing pressure, through temporary detentions, questionings and travel bans. End summary.

¶3. (U) On September 14, human rights activist Guo Feixiong, was arrested at his home in Guangzhou, according to Radio Free Asia and Reporters Without Borders. This arrest comes on the heels of the arrests of dissident writer Li Hong and Chen Shuqing (reported to be a leader of the China Democratic Party). In addition to arresting Guo, police confiscated Guo's computer, cell phone, manuscripts, books and other materials. Guo has been charged with "illegal business operation," for allegedly publishing and selling 20,000 books in an improper manner by setting up a fake publishing house and using an ISBN (international standard book number) without permission. Guo's wife, Zhang Qing, told reporters that she was also questioned over three hours by police. She said that she refused to eat for 24 hours as a gesture to protest the police taking away her husband. Zhang refused to sign a notification of Guo Feixiong's arrest, thereby hoping that a lawyer could come save him.

¶4. (C) Guo first gained national attention in the summer of 2005 when he provided legal counsel for victims of the Taishi village incident and wrote several articles on the Internet about the issue. Guo has previously been detained three times since the Taishi incident and was assaulted by police and thugs three times in 2006 alone. Guo visited the United States (with a visa referral from Consulate Guangzhou) from May to July this year for a China Aid Association conference.

¶5. (C) Tang Jingling (a fellow Taishi-related rights lawyer who has recently faced increased government pressure and has his own lawsuit pending with Guangzhou authorities, ref A) told Polof that Guo is still being held in Guangzhou

Number 1 Detention Center. Tang also said that Beijing-based human rights lawyer Mo Shaoping will represent Guo's case. Mo is currently in Guangzhou and Tang will be delivering a formal declaration from the defense counsel, attesting to Guo's innocence, to Guangzhou police today.

"A Black Month for China"

¶6. (C) A dissident in Fujian Province who is very familiar with the "Rights Protection Movement" in an email told Poloff that Guangzhou Police "had been meticulously researching" Guo's financial records, collecting information on him for many years. According to the dissident, police were only recently able to put together the charge of "illegal business practices." Guo's wife was quoted by the dissident as saying that the charges were "obviously contrived by police as a new tactic to arrest my husband." The dissident went on to write that the months of August and September have been very black for China and that many human rights activists feel "there are fewer and fewer of us left in China." Additionally, Wang Youjin, a legal scholar at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, was quoted by media sources saying that Chinese authorities have no evidence to convict rights activists and must "make a big fuss over trivial matters and put them behind bars. This is absolutely illegal."

Comment

¶7. (C) As Beijing 06612 predicted, the Rights Protection Movement seems to have overstepped its limits and is now under attack. The arrests of the movement's leaders in North China such as Gao Zhisheng and Chen Guangcheng has now spread to South China (see septel on other South China activists). The effort to intimidate Guo Feixiong seems to have been particularly difficult for Chinese authorities to

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orchestrate. The PSB has utilized different tactics to stop Guo including surveillance, intimidation, detainment and assault. All of these methods have failed and, similar to the charge against the New York Times staff reporter Zhao Yan, it must now resort to charging Guo with financial crimes in order to obstruct his political activities.

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